

Although Sinclair Broadcasting uses the public airwaves and is therefore obligated to serve the public interest, it is engaged in a pattern of behavior that is contrary to that mandate.

Sinclair's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation, and it is an outrageous example of using the public airwaves for political manipulation. I'm beginning to feel as if I'm living in a bad rewrite of an Orwell novel.

Sinclair uses our airwaves free of charge and is obligated by law to serve our interests, not the narrow interests of one or another political party that happens to be in power. When large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line - in this case the blatant support of a political party that has been pandering to Sinclair's interest's - and less of what we need for our democracy.

It's really bad enough that the FCC did not act when networks decided not to run our political conventions this year. Those conventions, staged though they are, allow parties -which are politicking to govern us for the next four years - to show us what they think is important to our domestic well-being and our status in the world. This is a once-every-four-years opportunity, and in this case it meant that the public at large did not have the opportunity to judge either candidate on his home turf. But the blatant, prolonged political ad smearing Kerry that Sinclair intends to air goes far beyond that, into the realm of bias and obsfucation. And this cuts at the heart of our democracy and the fair access rules that are supposed to govern our election. AND WHICH YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO DEFEND.

Moreover, the media consolidation represented by Sinclair gives us packaged programs produced at "News Central" instead of real news. In a democracy, it's supremely important that our media provide substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.